

Frequently Asked Questions Alaska English Language Arts & Mathematics Standards

Did Alaska adopt the Common Core State Standards?

Alaska did not adopt the Common Core State Standards. Adopting states agreed to accept the standards in their entirety and not change them in the future. Alaska did not want to be bound by these restrictions.

What is an academic standard?

- Academic standards are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do at specific grade levels.
- Standards focus on essential concepts, knowledge, and skills necessary for students to succeed.
- Standards are designed to increase student achievement.

Are the Alaska English Language Arts & Mathematics Standards curriculum?

No. It is the responsibility of local school districts to develop curriculum that is aligned to the Alaska Standards. Curriculum is the plan, including the use of instructional materials, for how students will meet the standards.

How are the Alaska English Language Arts & Mathematics Standards different from the former Grade Level Expectations (GLEs)?

- The Alaska English Language Arts & Mathematics Standards extend to graduation. The GLEs went only through grade 10.
- The GLEs were a blueprint for assessment. The Alaska English Language Arts & Mathematics Standards equip students with skills for success in higher education and a career.
- The GLEs were a list of content that was to be covered in a grade level. The Alaska English Language Arts & Mathematics Standards identify a set of skills and abilities students should display at the end of a particular grade.
- The Alaska English Language Arts Standards
 - Include standards for speaking and listening. The GLEs did not.
 - Have specific standards for literacy in history, social studies, science, and technical subjects for grades 6-12. The GLEs did not include literacy standards for content areas.
 - Emphasize the need for students to demonstrate independence in comprehending informational as well as literary text. The GLEs did not.

*Toward preparing
students to be
college, career, and
culturally ready
graduates*



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- The Alaska Mathematics Standards
 - Delve deeper into topics, providing an opportunity for complete mastery before moving to new information; they are more rigorous than the GLEs.
 - Blend key mathematical practices with rigorous content to promote a solid mathematical background based on reasoning.

Do the new Alaska English Language Arts Standards have implication for instructional practice?

Yes. The Alaska English Language Arts Standards reflect three key shifts, which will encourage changes to instructional practices and curriculum.

- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.
- Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from literary and informational text.
- Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary.

Are there different instructional strategies in the new Alaska Mathematical Standards?

Yes. In the mathematics standards there are three key shifts, which will encourage changes to instructional practices and curriculum.

- **Focus:** In each grade, or course, focus deeply on 2-4 topics.
 - For each grade level there are fewer big ideas to be covered.
- **Coherence:** Concepts logically connect from one grade to the next and link to other major topics within each grade.
 - There is a progression of topics, allowing for deeper learning each year. This also avoids the re-teaching of topics each year.
- **Rigor:** In major topics the standards pursue with equal intensity: conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application.
 - The standards explicitly start with the goal of career and college readiness. Planning backwards from graduation to elementary school developed a body of knowledge to support this goal.

What is the Department of Education & Early Development doing to help districts, schools, and teachers transition to the Alaska English Language Arts Standards?

The Department of Education & Early Development has spent the last year working with districts and schools through the awareness and transition phases for the new standards. During this time, the new standards were introduced. EED provided guidance to help them determine how best to move toward implementation of the new English Language Arts Standards.

The goal for this year is to work extensively on training and tools that districts can use to help teachers begin to successfully implement the new Alaska English Language Arts Standards.

- Fall and Spring Teaching & Learning Support Institutes
- Online professional learning supports including
 - Webinars
 - Modules
 - Instructional support documents